



February 5, 2020

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

All our young people need strong relationships with trusted, supportive adults in their lives to help them reach their full potential, but in today's world there are too many young people who lack those relationships. SB 1568 provides a technical fix so that vulnerable youth between the ages of 18 and 21 can ask an Oregon court to appoint a trusted adult as their guardian.

Children First for Oregon was founded in 1991 to galvanize community support and inform decision-makers about the solutions all of our children need. In January 2020, Children First and the Children's Trust Fund of Oregon merged, and will relaunch in 2020 as Our Children Oregon. This next evolution in our work together underscores that all children in Oregon are our children, and that we must strengthen our capacity and resolve to ensure all our children have the resources they need to thrive and belong.

The vulnerable youth who would benefit from this bill are non-US citizens without current permanent legal immigration status who cannot be reunified with one or both parents because of abuse or neglect and for whom being returned to their country of origin is not in their best interest. These youth are at high risk of houselessness and being victims of human trafficking.

With SB 1568, Oregon has the opportunity to join Washington, California, Colorado and other states that already protect these vulnerable youth, allowing a legal guardianship to support these youth and remove a barrier for these youth to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile status.

These are our children - our youth - and we must do what we can to ensure their safety, and provide opportunities for them to establish and maintain connections with supportive adults. Our Children Oregon urges your support of SB 1568.

Sincerely,
Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director

Our Children Oregon

Bringing Together Children First for Oregon and the Children's Trust Fund of Oregon

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